

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ratoath College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Jamestown Ratoath Co. Meath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76088T

Date of Inspection: 16-10-2018



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Art under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	15-10-2018 and 16-10-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Ratoath College is a co-educational school under the auspices of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) and the Catholic Bishop of Meath. The school has a current enrolment of 1046 students. The school offers Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Overall the quality of teaching and learning was good with some very good practice noted.
- Many instances of very good differentiated teaching approaches were noted during the evaluation.
- The quality of assessment is effective overall, with some very good formative assessment practice noted; there is scope to extend the recently-developed initiative to engage students in using formative feedback.
- The overall quality of provision and whole-school support for Art is very good; an aspect of health and safety provision needs to be reviewed.
- Commendably, the art department displays great enthusiasm in its work and regularly attends continuing professional development (CPD).
- The quality of planning and preparation for Art is very good; the inclusion of action planning would be beneficial.

Recommendations

- The recent initiative to engage learners further in using feedback on key pieces of work should be extended to all year groups.
- The art department should update the current risk assessment and review it annually.
- An action plan, which outlines specific targets and a time frame for review, should be developed to support the ongoing improvements in the teaching and learning of Art.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall the quality of teaching and learning was good with some very good practice noted.
- Learning intentions were shared with students at the beginning of all lessons. This very good practice proved effective in supporting and assessing students' learning, and clearly focused them on the knowledge and skills to be developed.
- Lessons observed were well planned and structured, with very effective use of information and communications technology noted in many instances. The content of lessons in the majority of cases was appropriately pitched and prepared with students' interests in mind. In these lessons students were motivated to learn and had a positive approach to participation in class tasks.
- In all of the lessons observed, classroom management was effective with clearly established routines evident in practical settings. Many examples of student work in both two and three dimensions were displayed in the specialist rooms. The students' work indicated that a very good range of media is used to support learning in Art.
- The exhibition of students' artwork in designated areas in the school, and projects such as the text-based artwork looking at social commentary, further highlights a commitment to providing students with an enriching and well-rounded understanding of Art.
- Teacher-student rapport was very good in all of the interactions observed. This was also evident in the ease with which students spoke with the teacher and asked for help when required.
- The quality of assessment was effective overall, with some examples of very good formative assessment practice noted. There is scope to further develop and broaden some aspects of assessment practice.
- A variety of teacher questioning strategies was noted in all lessons. A good balance of lower-order and higher-order questions was used to assess students' progress. It was noted in many lessons that teachers directed questions to students to assess individual student's learning and to support student engagement. It is recommended that this questioning strategy be extended to all lessons.
- Examples of very good differentiated teaching was noted in many of the lessons observed. This was evidenced by one-to-one tutorials and some differentiated questioning. Notably, differentiated homework activities are assigned periodically. These activities challenged students appropriately.
- Success criteria were shared with students at the start of a few lessons. This strategy offered students additional support to meaningfully engage with lesson content. The wider use of success criteria is encouraged.
- Commendable oral feedback was provided for students in the lessons visited. Observation of sketchbooks, copybooks and some larger art works indicated that students' work is monitored regularly. Some examples of very good written formative feedback was also noted.
- A recent initiative with second-year students encourages learners to focus on using feedback provided by the teacher. This is achieved through a teacher-designed template which engages students in a reflective task. This is good practice. Extending this initiative to all year groups, is recommended.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of provision and whole-school support for Art is very good. Option bands are constructed based on student choice in both junior and senior cycle.
- Time allocation for Art meets the specification and syllabus requirements for all year groups. However, the current arrangement of class time for lessons means that first-year students only have Art for one lesson per week. The art teachers and senior management are monitoring the impact of this arrangement on the overall quality of learner experiences and outcomes in Art. It is essential that this arrangement be kept under review.
- The team of art teachers displays high levels of enthusiasm and commitment in its work. The art department regularly engages with CPD and this is supported by the senior management team.
- Health and safety procedures are well established for art lessons. A safety plan for the department is included in planning documentation and appropriate signage is displayed in the specialist rooms. At the time of the evaluation a risk assessment was reviewed. This document was prepared in 2008. It is recommended that the risk assessment be reviewed and updated annually.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Very good progress has been made in planning and preparation for Art. There is scope however, to include action planning to support the ongoing improvements in the teaching and learning of Art.
- Very good lines of communication exist between the art department and senior management. Minutes of subject meetings are shared with senior management and an analysis of student outcomes in the certificate examinations is completed by the subject coordinator and then discussed with the principal.
- Short-term goals are set individually and informally by teachers. At the time of the evaluation however, no formal action planning was evident by the department. It is recommended that the art department uses the analysis of student outcomes and reflections on classroom practice, to collaboratively devise and implement specific targets aimed at supporting ongoing improvements in Art. Clear time frames and periods of review should be outlined in order to support progress.
- Long-term programmes of work and short-term units of learning are well documented in the subject plan. The units of learning for first and second year appropriately document learning outcomes from the Visual Art specification.
- Good programmes of work for senior theory and practical lessons were reviewed during the evaluation. Planning for theory lessons indicate that students receive many teacher-designed handouts and notes for Art History. There is scope for the teachers of Art to broaden opportunities to engage students further in making their own notes.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and art department at the conclusion of the evaluation.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;